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HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE OF SANSKRIT LANGUAGE IN KASHMIR

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ABSTRACT

According to sources there were dominance of Sanskrit languages in Kashmir. The various commentaries of religions were written in Sanskrit languages especially Buddhism. The fourth Buddhist of Kashmir is also known as Sanskrit Buddhism of Kashmir. The primary sources of Kashmir like Rajtaragni were written in Sanskrit languages. The Rajatarangini speaks of many of these Poets who flourished long before and who thought and wrote with ability on different branches of literature. One of them, Vasunanada, a ruler of the Valley, is said to have composed a well-known work on erotics. Another Kashmirian named Candaka is set to have been great poet, though no specific work is attributed to him. It is not unlikely that he has seen Candka to whom some verses are ascribed in Ballabhadeba's Subhasitavali, perhaps he may be also identical with the writer Candra, mentioned by Chinese traveller It-Sing. Kalhanas Rajtringani deals at some length with career and activities of one Matragupta who ruled Kashmir for a while. He was a poet and a contemporary of Pravarasena-ii of Kashmir and Vikramaditya Harsha of Ujjaini. Some scholars have endeavoured to prove his identity with a great Kalidasa.

KEYWORDS: *Development, Historical background, Importance and Grammer.*

INTRODUCTION

Kashmiri pundits took pains "in keeping the Sanskrit language pure and perfect." The Brahmanical religion finds its practical expression in Sacrificial performance. And the sacred oblogatioin incumbent on the Brahmans of rendering correctly the letter and sense of their vedic texts necessarily involved a good deal of serious gramitical

and etymological study. They believed the grammar was the only instrument which could take care of adhering to these texts and holding the entire Sanskrit language and literature in their firm grip hence Panini's monumental work on Sanskrit grammar, the Ashtadhyayi became the object of their special study. Kashmiri were keen to remain masters of Sanskrit grammar is shown by the number of works authored by them on this subject. Kalhana refers to the study of Patanjali's grammatical Mahabhasya under Jayapida towards the end of eighth century A.D. In Prosody and metrics Kashmiri authors have made valuable contribution to Sanskrit language and literature.

Candragomin, the founder of the Candra school of Sanskrit grammar, probably lived in Kashmir.¹ According to Kalhana's Rajatarangini Candracarya revived the study of the Mahabhasya Abhimanyu. Kalhana also says that while writing Rajatarangini he received considerable information regarding the earliest periods from a work entitled The Nilamata-purana.² Kalhana's very frequent references to numerous Kashmirian authors and their works enable us to follow the history of Sanskrit literature of Kashmir with tolerable accuracy from the 8th century onwards. The works of many of the writers themselves have also survived and some of these contain valuable information about other foregoing and contemporary writers and their compositions.³ The Poets of the Karkota period according to Kalhana were Damodaragupta.⁴ Manoratha, Sankhadatta, Cataka and Jayapida. Damodaragupta is said to have written a book called Kuttani-mata kavya.⁶ In the reign of Karkota king Ajitapida, there lived a poet named Sankuka who composed a poem called Bhuvanabhyudaya. The theme of the book was centered round the conflict between the regents Mamma and Utpalaka.⁷ In spite of the lack of historical materials in the early portions of his work, Kalhana's splendour of imagination, depth and range of thought and above all the power of centralizing many talents to a single purpose, had given his Rajatarangini a literary immortality. Among the special merits of Kalhana as a historian, Stein mentions his impartiality and independence, individuality of his characters, accuracy of genealogical statements, high sense of historical truthfulness in later parts of the Chronicle and exactness of topographical details.⁸ Kaniska's council is an important landmark in the history of Buddhism. It represents the rise of what may be called Sanskrit Buddhism. From now onwards Sanskrit became the language of Buddhist thought and discussion all over the north. As already been noticed, the canonical texts and the commentaries on them drawn up or compared by the eminent Sanskrit scholars like Ashvagosh and Parshva. Inevitably all subsequent discussions on them was also in Sanskrit. The emergence of Sanskrit as a language of Buddhism had far reaching consequences. It meant the domination of the faith by those who had mastery over the language, or, in other words, the Brahman converts.⁹ After Nagarjuna's departure from the Valley a number of Kashmiri monks used to go south to visit Sri Parvata where the celebrated philosopher had taken up his residence and which in course of time developed into a great centre of Buddhist learning. Monks in large numbers however, went to the northern regions where they played a conspicuous part in the propagation of Buddhism. To do their job effectively they often acquired mastery in the language of the region they visited and translated the principal

Sanskrit words into it for the benefit of the local people.¹⁰ In the plain watered by Ganges and Yamuna the language used is Sanskrit and the words tell us about the time that follow the death of Buddha. Reacting Kashmir as unlimited expansion opened before Buddhism towards central Asia, the writers of the valley and neighbouring countries use Sanskrit, Sharda, Ladhakhi, Tibetan or Chinese etc. the respective languages of their regions and countries. They embellish, recast, comment, develop and collect ancient texts. Moreover, Kanishka got Mahavibhasas compiled in Sanskrit with the help of Asvaghosa in Kashmir.¹¹ Asvaghosh was a resident of Saketa and belonged to a Brahman family.¹² He was a literary giant and was well-versed in grammar, the four Vedas, six treatises on Vedangas, conversant with Tripitakas of 18 Schools of Buddhism and a laureate of literature. Due to his literary genius, he was invited by Katyayaniputra to Kashmir.¹³ where he compiled the vibhasas and gave them literary form.¹⁴ Asvaghosh the eminent author of buddhacarita the Saundrananda and Sariputraprakarma, attended the council. The commentaries on all the Buddhist texts were compiled into treatises known as upadesa-sastras and Vibhasa-sastras, and the commentaries were all in Sanskrit languages.¹⁵

CONCLUSION

During conclusion we can say that in Kashmir there was dominance of Sanskrit language. The eminent scholars like Asvaghosh Damodaragupta Manoratha, Sankhadatta Cataka and Samdhimat. The eminent scholar Kalhana wrote Rajatarangini was written in Sanskrit. The fourth Buddhist held in Kashmir, in which commentaries were written in copper plates in Sanskrit languages, which shows that there was dominance of Sanskrit languages in Kashmir.

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